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Amendments

Claims 1-26 (Previously canceled)

27. (Currently amended) An electronic product exchange system comprising:

(a) a file server accessible through a generally available wide area network:

(1) from personal computers of a multitude of potential buyers coupled to the network, and

(2) by a multitude of potential sellers;

(b) a first computer database, accessible to the file server, containing pricing and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale;

(c) a processor coupled to the file server and capable of:

(1) searching the first computer database for those products of the multitude that match a request containing select product configuration data transmitted through the wide area network by one of the potential buyers, and

(2) automatically transferring the pricing data and product configuration data of the matching products through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request; and

(d) a second computer database coupled to the file server and capable of automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in response to purchase orders transmitted over the wide area network to the file server from the personal computer of a potential buyer; and

(e) a third computer database coupled to the file server to which potential buyers can post special offers to purchase, for consideration by a particular, buyer-specified potential seller.

28. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 further comprising an automated billing system capable of automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order transmitted over the wide area network to the file server from the personal computer of a potential buyer.

29-30. (Cancel)

31. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 further comprising a seller identification database.

32. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the potential sellers can upload to the file server at will the pricing data and product configuration data for products being offered by the potential sellers.

33. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein each potential seller can perform a mass upload to the file server of pricing data and product configuration data for all products of that potential seller.

34. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the processor is capable of ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

35. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the first computer database further contains geographic data for the sellers, and wherein the processor is capable of limiting matching products to those products in a geographic region specified by the potential buyer.

36. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the request can include a price cap, and wherein the processor is capable of limiting matching products to those products below the specified price cap.

37. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the processor is capable of identifying the lowest-priced matching product and automatically transferring the pricing and product configuration data for the lowest-priced matching product through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

38. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 further comprising a network link between the file server and financial institutions.

39. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the wide area network is the Internet.

40. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the product configuration data includes information concerning the products' brand, style, or make.

41. (Previously presented) The system of claim 40 wherein the product configuration data also includes information concerning the products' color choices, options, or feature choices.

42. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the product configuration data also includes detailed descriptions of the products.

43. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27 wherein the product configuration data includes information concerning the products' color choices, options, or feature choices.

44. (Currently amended) The system of claim 27:

- (a) wherein the wide area network is the Internet;
- (b) wherein the processor is capable of ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request;
- (c) wherein the potential sellers can upload to the file server at will the pricing data and product configuration data for products being offered by the potential sellers; and
- (d) further comprising an automated billing system capable of automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order transmitted over the wide area network to the file server from the personal computer of a potential buyer; and
- ~~(e) further comprising a third computer database coupled to the file server to which potential buyers can post special offers to purchase, for consideration by potential sellers.~~

45. (Previously presented) An electronic product exchange system comprising:

- (a) a file server accessible through the Internet:
 - (1) from personal computers of a multitude of potential buyers coupled to the network, and
 - (2) by a multitude of potential sellers;
- (b) a first computer database, accessible to the file server, containing pricing and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale;
- (c) a processor coupled to the file server and capable of:
 - (1) searching the first computer database for those products of the multitude that match a request containing select product configuration data transmitted through the Internet by one of the potential buyers, and
 - (2) automatically transferring the pricing data and product configuration data of the matching products through the Internet to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request;
- (d) a second computer database coupled to the file server to which potential buyers can post through the Internet special offers to purchase, for consideration by potential sellers; and

(e) a third computer database coupled to the file server and capable of automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in response to either of:

- (1) a purchase order transmitted through the Internet to the file server from the personal computer of a potential buyer, and
- (2) an acceptance of a special offer to purchase transmitted through the Internet to the file server from one of the potential sellers.

46. (Currently amended) A method for establishing implementing an electronic product exchange comprising:

(a) making accessible through a generally available wide area network a first computer database containing pricing data and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale by a multitude of potential sellers;

(b) making accessible through the network a processor capable of receiving a command from personal computers of a multitude of potential buyers coupled to the network, which processor is capable of:

(1) searching the first computer database for those products of the multitude that match a request containing select product configuration data transmitted through the wide area network by one of the potential buyers, and

(2) automatically transferring the pricing data and product configuration data of the matching products through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request; and

(c) accepting through the network from any of the potential buyers a special offer to purchase, for consideration by a particular, buyer-specified potential seller; and

(d) making the first computer database accessible to automatically recording in a second computer database capable of automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in response to product purchases agreed upon through the electronic product exchange orders transmitted over the network from the personal computer of a potential buyer.

47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 46 further comprising configuring the first computer database so that each of the potential sellers can perform a mass upload at will of the pricing data and product configuration data for products being offered by each such potential seller.

48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 46 further comprising coupling to the second computer database an automated billing system capable of automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order transmitted over the network from the personal computer of a potential buyer.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 46 wherein the wide area network is the Internet.

50. (Currently amended) A method for operating an electronic product exchange comprising:

(a) accepting, and storing in a single, first database, from each of a multitude of potential sellers, through a generally available wide area network, pricing data and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale by the multitude of potential sellers;

(b) accepting through the generally available wide area network, from personal computers of each of a multitude of potential buyers, requests containing select product configuration data;

(c) responsive to each of said requests, searching the first computer database for those products of the multitude that match the select product configuration data of the request and automatically transferring the pricing data and product configuration data of the matching products through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request; and

(d) accepting purchase orders over the wide area network from the personal computer of a potential buyer, and responsive thereto, automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in a second computer database; and

(e) accepting from potential buyers special offers to purchase directed to a particular, buyer-specified potential seller, and responsive thereto, automatically making available to the buyer-specified potential seller, but not other sellers, the offer to purchase.

51. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 further comprising automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order for which information is recorded in the second database.

52. (Cancel)

53. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 further comprising, for each potential seller, before part (a), collecting in a third database seller identification data.

54. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 further comprising automatically ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

55. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 wherein part (a) also includes accepting geographic data for each of the potential sellers, wherein part (b) also includes accepting specifications of one of several geographic regions, and wherein part (c) also includes limiting matching products to those products in the geographic region specified by the potential buyer.

56. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 wherein part (b) also includes accepting specification of a price cap, and wherein part (c) also includes limiting matching products to those products below the price cap specified by the potential buyer.

57. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 further comprising automatically identifying the lowest-priced matching product and automatically transferring the pricing and product configuration data for the lowest-priced matching product through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

58. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 wherein accepting product configuration data includes accepting information concerning the products' brand, style, or make.

59. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 wherein accepting product configuration data also includes accepting information concerning the products' color choices, options, or feature choices.

60. (Previously presented) The method of claim 50 wherein accepting product configuration data also includes accepting detailed descriptions of the products.

61. (Cancel)

62. (Currently amended) The method of claim 50 further comprising:

(a) automatically ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request;

(b) accepting from potential buyers, and posting at a third computer database accessible over the network by potential sellers, the special offers to purchase; and

(c) automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order for which information is recorded in the second database.

63. (Currently amended) A method for operating an electronic product exchange comprising:

(a) accepting, and storing in a single, first database, from each of a multitude of potential sellers, through the Internet, pricing data and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale by the multitude of potential sellers;

(b) accepting through the Internet, from personal computers of each of a multitude of potential buyers, requests containing select product configuration data;

(c) responsive to each of said requests, searching the first database for those products of the multitude that match the select product configuration data of the request and automatically transferring the pricing data and product configuration data of the matching products through the Internet to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request;

(d) accepting from potential buyers through the Internet, and posting at a second computer database accessible over the network by potential sellers, special offers to purchase at a specified price;

(e) accepting over the Internet:

(1) purchase orders from the personal computers of at least one of the potential buyers, and

(2) acceptances of selected of the posted special offers to purchase from at least one of the potential sellers; and

(f) responsive to orders and acceptances in part (e), automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in a third computer database.

64. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63 further comprising automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order for which information is recorded in the third database.

65. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63 further comprising automatically ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the Internet to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

66. (Previously presented) The method of claim 63 wherein accepting the pricing data and product configuration data comprises allowing the potential sellers to upload the data through the Internet to the computer storage at will.

67. (New) An electronic product exchange system comprising:

(a) a file server accessible through a generally available wide area network:

(1) from personal computers of a multitude of potential buyers coupled to the network, and

(2) by a multitude of potential sellers;

(b) a first computer database, accessible to the file server, containing pricing and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale;

(c) a processor coupled to the file server and capable of:

(1) searching the first computer database for those products of the multitude that match a request, containing a price cap and select product configuration data, transmitted through the wide area network by one of the potential buyers, and

(2) automatically transferring the pricing data and product configuration data of the products that match the product configuration data of the request and that are priced below the specified price cap, through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request; and

(d) a second computer database coupled to the file server and capable of automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in response to purchase orders transmitted over the wide area network to the file server from the personal computer of a potential buyer.

68. (New) The system of claim 67 further comprising a third computer database coupled to the file server to which potential buyers can post special offers to purchase, for consideration by potential sellers.

69. (New) The system of claim 67 wherein each potential seller can perform a mass upload to the file server of pricing data and product configuration data for all products of that potential seller.

70. (New) The system of claim 67 wherein the processor is capable of ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the

wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

71. (New) The system of claim 67 wherein the processor is further capable of identifying the lowest-priced matching product and automatically transferring the pricing and product configuration data for the lowest-priced matching product through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

72. (New) The system of claim 67 further comprising a network link between the file server and financial institutions.

73. (New) The system of claim 67 wherein the product configuration data includes (a) information concerning the products' brand, style, or make, (b) information concerning the products' color choices, options, or feature choices, and (c) detailed descriptions of the products.

74. (New) The system of claim 67:

(a) wherein the wide area network is the Internet;

(b) wherein the processor is capable of ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request;

(c) wherein the potential sellers can upload to the file server at will the pricing data and product configuration data for products being offered by the potential sellers;

(d) further comprising an automated billing system capable of automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order transmitted over the wide area network to the file server from the personal computer of a potential buyer; and

(e) further comprising a third computer database coupled to the file server to which potential buyers can post special offers to purchase, for consideration by potential sellers.

75. (New) A method for implementing an electronic product exchange comprising:

(a) making accessible through the Internet a first computer database containing pricing data and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale by a multitude of potential sellers;

(b) making accessible through the Internet a processor capable of receiving a command from personal computers of a multitude of potential buyers coupled to the network, which processor is capable of:

(1) searching the first computer database for those products of the multitude that match a request, containing a price cap and select product configuration data, transmitted through the wide area network by one of the potential buyers, and

(2) automatically transferring the pricing data and product configuration data of the products that match the product configuration data of the request and that are priced below the specified price cap, through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request

(c) making the first computer database accessible to a second computer database capable of automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in response to purchase orders transmitted over the Internet from the personal computer of a potential buyer.

76. (New) The method of claim 75 further comprising:

(a) configuring the first computer database so that each of the potential sellers can perform a mass upload at will of the pricing data and product configuration data for products being offered by each such potential seller;

(b) coupling to the second computer database an automated billing system capable of automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order transmitted over the network from the personal computer of a potential buyer.

77. (New) A method for operating an electronic product exchange comprising:

(a) accepting, and storing in a single, first database, from each of a multitude of potential sellers, through a generally available wide area network, pricing data and product configuration data for a multitude of different products for sale by the multitude of potential sellers;

(b) accepting through the generally available wide area network, from personal computers of each of a multitude of potential buyers, requests containing a price cap and select product configuration data;

(c) responsive to each of said requests, searching the first computer database for those products of the multitude that match the select product configuration data of the request and that have prices equal to or below the price cap in the request, and automatically transferring the pricing data and product

configuration data of the matching products through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request; and

(d) accepting purchase orders over the wide area network from the personal computer of a potential buyer, and responsive thereto, automatically recording buyer identification data, seller identification data, price, and product configuration data in a second computer database.

78. (New) The method of claim 77 further comprising automatically generating a bill for a fee for each purchase order for which information is recorded in the second database.

79. (New) The method of claim 77 further comprising automatically ranking the matching products by price and automatically transferring the ranking through the wide area network to the personal computer of the potential buyer who made the request.

80. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein part (a) also includes accepting geographic data for each of the potential sellers, wherein part (b) also includes accepting specifications of one of several geographic regions, and wherein part (c) also includes limiting matching products to those products in the geographic region specified by the potential buyer.

Respectfully submitted,

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